

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-47 remain pending in the application. Applicants note with appreciation the indication on page 8 of the Office Action that claims 7, 14, 17-19, 31 and 40 contain allowable subject matter. However, earlier in the Office Action, the remaining claims are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) on the basis of U.S. Publication No. US 2002/0133396 (Barnhart).

The rejections raised under 35 U.S.C. §102 are respectfully traversed because the Barnhart publication does not qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102(e), as is evidenced by the attached 37 C.F.R. §1.131 Declaration of Edward Rodriguez, Thomas K. Vander Vlis and Peter J. Butziger. The Declaration establishes that the present application was conceived and reduced to practice prior to the March 13, 2001 filing date of the Barnhart publication. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-6, 8-13, 15-16, 20-30, 32-39 and 41-47 is respectfully requested.

All objections and rejections raised in the Office Action having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited

Respectfully submitted,

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